

Additions  
and  
Replacements  
for the  
*Kentucky Writing Handbook*

February 2007

Grades 4, 7 and 12

**Reflection**—the careful consideration and serious contemplation of past events for the purpose of evaluating or making sense of those past events.

**Literacy**—In a narrow sense, **literacy is the ability of a student to use and understand language through reading and writing.** However, the concept of literacy may also be defined very broadly. **Literacy is the ability of a student to use language to communicate with others—through reading, writing, speaking, listening, observing and through the use of the combination of these skills.**

### **Instructional Issues Q & A: Reflective Writing for the Kentucky Writing Portfolio**

**Q: What is the purpose of the reflective entry in the portfolio?**

A: The purpose of the reflective entry is for students to **analyze their growth as writers through the lens of literacy.** In a narrow sense, literacy is the ability of a student to use and understand language through reading and writing. However, the concept of literacy may also be defined very broadly. It is the ability of a student to use language to communicate with others—through reading, writing, speaking, listening, observing, inquiring, etc. as per the diagram on page 11 of the *Kentucky Writing Handbook*. Students who are able to make connections between writing development and literacy experiences are more likely to meet the “authentic (and insightful) focused purpose” called for in the writing criteria from the *Kentucky Writing Scoring Rubric*.

A piece of writing that does not make strong literacy connections would not (for that reason alone) render the portfolio incomplete. However, such a piece, most likely, does not meet the writing criteria under purpose, audience and idea development as strongly as a piece in which the student has made those connections.

**Q: If a student’s reflective entry does not refer to reading, will the portfolio be considered “incomplete”?**

A: The portfolio would not be considered incomplete for that reason alone. The better literacy connection(s) a student makes, however, the more likely he or she is to approach the “authentic (and insightful) focused purpose” called for on the rubric. Literacy may be defined more broadly than reading and writing if the student so chooses. See first question above.

**Q: Is it appropriate in the reflective entry for a student to refer to all the pieces in his/her portfolio?**

A: While referencing all the portfolio entries would not make a portfolio incomplete for that reason alone, it is **unlikely** that a student needs to reference each piece in his/her portfolio to analyze growth in writing through literacy. It may be more appropriate for students to reference a very limited number of entries (perhaps one if the focus in writing and literacy development has to do with that piece). It is also possible that students do not reference *any* particular piece in the portfolio at all. See *Kentucky Writing Handbook*, Chapter 11, Reflective Writing.

**Q: Can a poem be included as the reflective piece?**

A: No. A poem would not be an appropriate piece to include in this reflective category. While good poetry is certainly reflective, poetry is considered a literary genre, fulfills a literary purpose, and fits into the literary category.

The reflective entry in the portfolio is intended to be a transactive entry. It asks that students analyze growth in writing through literacy for **the transactive purpose** of informing an audience.

Examples may be found on page 81 of the *Kentucky Writing Handbook*, Part 1: Writing Development.

**Q: How can I help students improve their reflective thinking and writing?**

A: The key to good reflection is critical thinking. Therefore, regular practice helping students consider the literacy connection is necessary to build those reflective skills.

An excellent way for teachers to assist students with reflective thinking and writing is to **incorporate the use of the working folder into instruction**. The working folders are not intended to be stored away for the student to never see it. Students who are able to see their growth in writing over time through the pieces included in the working folder are much more likely to be able to reflect on their growth as writers. Regular practice reflecting on learning will help students to be able to think more analytically and reflectively (in any content area). Therefore, students who regularly work at reflection will be better able to show those skills in the writing assessment portfolio.

**Q: I've had a problem with the reflective pieces from the past being "cookie cutter"—all of the pieces sound alike. How can I help the students develop reflective writing that is not "cookie cutter"?**

A: First, no two reflective pieces should sound alike if the student is actually analyzing his/her **individual** growth in writing through literacy. Teachers may consider the reflective entry to be very much like other entries in the portfolio—students may all have the same or similar purposes in writing (analyze growth in writing through literacy); however, each student may focus the piece in a unique way. Consider the personal piece included in the portfolio. All students are analyzing the significance of an event or relationship, etc. However, they may all focus on something completely different. It is the difference in focus that makes the piece unique to the writer.

To help avoid "cookie cutter" pieces, teachers should help students brainstorm their own literacy experiences and help them focus the piece given the audience the student selects. Teachers should **avoid** having students list and refer to each piece in the portfolio. Likewise, teachers should avoid using a "checklist" of items to include in a reflective entry. Teachers should avoid having students all write in the same form, the same way. There is little ownership in that. We wouldn't expect the personal entries of two students to be alike; similarly, we would not expect two reflective entries to be alike. Each student's literacy experience is different.

# Applying the Criteria to Written Analysis

<b>Content</b>
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## **Purpose/Audience**

- ☐ demonstrates a student's ability to narrow and focus a topic, issue or problem
- ☐ clearly identifies and defines controlling idea to break down (analyze) the "how," "why," "to what extent" or "to what degree" of the topic, issue or problem
- ☐ demonstrates student choice and ownership
- ☐ demonstrates student's ability to analyze for a larger purpose—to answer a real question for readers who might want or need to know the answer(s)
- ☐ explains relationships and makes connections sufficient to meet audience's needs
- ☐ demonstrates the writer's ability to engage the interests of an audience beyond the teacher (but may include the teacher)
- ☐ demonstrates appropriate voice or tone for purpose and audience

## **Idea Development/Support**

- ☐ demonstrates depth of idea development through analysis
- ☐ breaks down topic, issue or problem into parts to draw new relationships or make new connections about the whole
- ☐ demonstrates necessary, justified, logical, relevant, credible and specific support for ideas
- ☐ demonstrates evidence of the writer's ability to discuss material appropriately and insightfully through analysis
- ☐ demonstrates sufficient content understanding
- ☐ demonstrates complex, analytical thinking and insight about information presented
- ☐ demonstrates the effective integration of source material to support ideas. The writing does not include quotations simply to include quotations; rather, the writing demonstrates the use of source material and factual information to support analysis
- ☐ applies characteristics of the genre (e.g., article, proposal, literary analysis)

## Structure

### Organization

- ☐ demonstrates logical, coherent organization for purpose and audience (e.g., comparison/contrast, cause/effect, problem/solution, pro/con argument)
- ☐ is organized around a central thesis/controlling idea and is carefully developed to support that thesis/controlling idea
- ☐ is organized effectively given the characteristics of the genre
- ☐ demonstrates appropriate use of transitional elements

### Sentences

- ☐ demonstrates appropriate sentence structure for purpose, audience and genre
- ☐ demonstrates grammatically-correct, effective sentences

## Conventions

### Language

- ☐ demonstrates appropriate word choice to support meaning; writing is concise and clear and appropriate to purpose and audience
- ☐ demonstrates appropriate, effective language and word choice

### Conventions

- ☐ observes standard conventions of grammar, spelling, punctuation and documentation

# Training and Scoring Process for the Writing Portfolio

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## Training Process

Usually writing portfolio training will begin in the fall with either a fall cluster leader training session and/or a development-training telecast (see Chapter 15 *Media, Print and Online Resources* in the *Kentucky Writing Handbook* “Part I: Writing Development”). If a telecast is used, cluster leaders and cluster members should view the telecast together. This telecast will focus on the generation of writing portfolios and requirements, as well as other important portfolio development issues.

During the winter, grade-specific scoring training telecasts will be aired (see Chapter 15 *Media, Print and Online Resources* in “Part 1: Writing Development”). Cluster leaders should videotape these telecasts for later use. These telecasts will focus on scoring issues and will discuss new training materials. Cluster leaders will attend regional scoring training meetings where they will be trained to provide video-supported training to their cluster members. KDE recommends additional training for teachers new to portfolio scoring (see “CD-ROM Scoring Training” in Chapter 8, *Training: Support Materials*).

## Scoring Session Design

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has developed guidelines for the appropriate scoring of portfolios.

- **Scoring Process**

Trained teachers and administrators will score writing portfolios each spring following the official KDE spring cluster leader scoring training and the school-level scoring training. This process will reinforce one of the main purposes of portfolio assessment: to integrate writing and writing assessment with classroom instruction. The implications from the assessment will identify areas of need in writing instruction.

Trained scorers will score portfolios using the *Kentucky Writing Scoring Rubric* and record scores on the *Score Report Form*. Cluster Leaders/Scoring Facilitators will compile data on the Accumulation forms which will then be provided to the DAC or DAC's designee for input into the computer application. The principal will complete the Principal's Quality Control Measures Confirmation form which will then be sent to the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC). The DAC will collect all forms and input the data into the computer application and forward it to the testing company. Composite scores for portfolios will be calculated using a computer application provided to each DAC with testing materials in the spring. Schools may then use the data collected during the scoring session to complete a portfolio analysis.

- **Double-blind Scoring**

Beginning in 2006-2007, all schools must score the completed writing portfolios using double-blind scoring during a scoring session in which all scorers and the scoring leader/facilitator are present.

- ❑ **In double-blind scoring, scorers do not know the identity of the previous scorer and are unaware of previous scores. Any record of previous scores should be removed from the portfolio by the scoring leader/facilitator or designee.**
- ❑ The session begins with portfolios distributed among scorers. Each scorer will then score a portfolio, recording the subdomain scores for each piece in the portfolio on a copy of the *Score Report Form*.
- ❑ Once a portfolio is scored, it is given to a person designated to record scores (scoring leader/facilitator). The scoring leader/facilitator will remove the *Score Report Form* (and/or any notes indicating a score or scorer) and redirect the portfolio to another scorer.
- ❑ The second scorer scores the portfolio, records the subdomain scores for each piece on the *Score Report Form* and returns the portfolio to the person recording the scores.
- ❑ The scoring leader/facilitator will determine the need for a third scorer when they see a portfolio that has a non-adjacent score in any subdomain. Non-adjacent scores are scores from the first and second reader that are more than two score points from each other (e.g., a 1 in Content from the first reader and a 3 in content from the second reader).
- ❑ The scoring leader/facilitator will record the scoring data for all portfolios on the Accumulation forms and return all Accumulation forms to the DAC.

**Note:** Beginning in 2006-2007, the use of quality control portfolios is mandated. Quality control records will be requested from schools invited to participate in the audit. Quality control portfolios are secure assessment materials and should be stored by the DAC with other secure assessment materials.

## Quality Control

Scorers should read and score KDE-provided quality control portfolios (those with scores pre-assigned by Scoring Accuracy Assurance Team Members) throughout the scoring session. The session leader keeps records of scorers' accuracy on quality control portfolios. These records provide information to schools/districts as to the accuracy rate of scorers. The following guidelines should be considered when planning for the use of quality control portfolios during scoring sessions:

- ❑ Schools should reproduce enough copies of the quality control portfolios or portfolio pieces for all scorers to read and score at the same time, allowing for a short discussion of the sample and the scoring criteria and rationale when all scores have been turned in.
- ❑ A quality control piece should be used after initial recalibration at the beginning of each scoring session and to refocus the scoring team after a long break such as lunch.
- ❑ Many schools with proven accuracy, as determined by KDE audits, also use quality control portfolios mid-morning and mid-afternoon in an all-day scoring session. Teams have also found it helpful to incorporate quality control portfolios after scoring 5-7 accountability portfolios.
- ❑ Another quality control component may be added with the use of table leaders during the scoring session. Table leaders are chosen from the most experienced and accurate scorers to "read behind" the scorers at their tables (4-5 scorers per table). At state scoring sessions, KDE requires table leaders to read 1 out of every 5 portfolios scored by each scorer (at least 20%). However, given the number of portfolios to be scored, table leaders may select a certain percentage or number of portfolios to read-behind each scorer to ensure consistency (e.g., 1 out of 10, 1 out of 8). When reading behind scorers using individual pieces or samples, it is important that table leaders read one piece from every or every other portfolio scored. The table leader should choose the portfolio or piece for "read-behinds" at random from each scorer's finished stack and should provide a "blind" read/scoring. The read-behinds function as a quality control measure and not an accountability score.

At a school scoring session when the table leader's score disagrees with the reader's score, the table leader discusses and clarifies the score with the reader outside the scoring area. **It is important to note that this table leader's score is not one of the two required scores for accountability purposes. The table leader's score is a quality control measure. Records should be kept of all table leaders' "read-behind" scores.**